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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RE
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COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

January 31, 1997

Ms. Cynthia Brun
1522 North Formosa Avenue #201
West Hollywood, California 90046

Dear Ms. Brun:

Thank you so much for writing to share with me your views regarding United States policy towards Indonesia. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

Please know that I understand your concerns regarding human rights abuses against the East Timorese perpetrated by the government of Indonesia. I was shocked and appalled when, in 1991, dozens of East Timorese pro-independence demonstrators were killed by Indonesian troops. Expressing concern over ongoing human rights abuses in Indonesia, Congress included in the FY95 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act a provision to refuse selling light arms and crowd-control equipment to Indonesia until the Secretary of State reports that human rights improvements have been made in that nation. Since this prohibition on sales was carefully crafted to focus on those military items that could be used for repressing the East Timorese population, I strongly supported its inclusion in the FY95 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act.

I have also supported, and will continue to support, President Clinton's efforts to keep the issue of East Timor at the top of the agenda in U.S. policy towards Indonesia. As you may know, President Clinton has met with President Suharto several times during the past few years and has consistently raised the issue of East Timor.

Indeed, I believe that to promote human rights advancements in East Timor, the U.S. must continue to be engaged in a constructive relationship with Indonesia. Consequently, I believe that America's economic, political and military contacts with Indonesia should be maintained. We have the opportunity to establish and build on such a relationship through the growing economic importance of Indonesia to the Pacific Rim. By cultivating our ties to Indonesia, I believe the U.S. can contribute to that country's prosperity and decrease its propensity to use repression to achieve political goals.

Be assured that I will continue to monitor reports of human rights abuses in Indonesia and will continue to work through diplomatic channels to voice our mutual concerns.

Again, thank you for writing. Please know that I am working hard to represent the best interests of California in the Senate. If you have any further concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 224-3841.

With warmest regards.

Sincerely yours,